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**In Honor of Nathen
Marsh Pusey**



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The Related Man
by David McCord

A Presentation
by James R. Killian, Jr.

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The Related Man

by David McCord

President Land, Ladies and Gentlemen:

THIS is the proper assembly to which I can happily admit that it took the chemist son of a Nobel chemist to alert me to the existence of the inferred third harmonic in English prose. A misguided undergraduate attempting to become a physicist, I had never thought of such refinement in style as related to kinetic ideas, nor should I have recognized it under a definition as neat as a recurring decimal. But I recognize it now in suggesting more simply that the overtones of Emerson are the final basis of his universality. We read him, for differing reasons, on different levels. His thought, like the layers of drifting clouds overhead, continues to move in majestic counterpoint. "Take the book [by which he means any book] into your two hands and read your eyes out," he says; "you will never find what I find." Take even a sentence from "Friendship" like this one: "Unrelated men give little joy to each other; will never suspect the latent powers of each." The implication is simple, but the explication is not. Joy can mean several things; and did not Emerson say somewhere that "every word was once a poem"—which is a fair description of poetic license? Now the first definition of joy is "the emotion excited by the acquisition or expectation of good." And this leads me to my title for

these few remarks: "The Related Man." For the related man, it seems to me, is man completely useful to his total value; and if I mention the name of the new president of Harvard University in this connection, you will fully understand my choice. For Nathan Marsh Pusey, twenty-fourth in line, is (from what converging evidence I can offer) the potentially related man of 3.6 miles up the river.

In the beginning, let us admit at once that we make a better stand with a fond farewell than we do with a hopeful Here you are at last. You have only to reread Gibbon's casual reflection on the hailing of his monumental work in 1764, and then that famous passage of the melancholy moonlight evening in his garden at Lausanne in 1787 when he took "an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion" to see how it goes. When the honored man in high office steps down at last, we praise him for the good things he accomplished, delighted to discover with a backward glance that his somewhat large mistakes were really trivial after all. But when the untried man assumes his new exacting duties, we are tongue-tied with well-wishes and those post-script admonitions awkwardly expressed. I observed with sympathetic interest that Mr. Pusey, at the outset of his epochal address before the convocation of the Divinity School, referred to the fact that for some weeks past his congratulatory mail has been tinged with friendly but forceful warnings as to things needed, or needed to be done or undone, at Harvard. In other words, he

has already been on the mat, though the mat is still marked *Welcome*.

Mr. Conant's successor was born in 1907 in Council Bluffs, Iowa. I remember Council Bluffs from my own western boyhood as the gateway to Omaha, yet happily situated on the east bank of the Missouri River which gives its citizens the right to capital letters on their Middle-West. Mr. Pusey thus grew up on the very edge of the prairie grass of the Willa Cather country. He was eleven years old when *My Ántonia* was published; unaware, I am sure, of something magnificent in it which today should bring him comfort in his solemn dedication. "At any rate," wrote Miss Cather, "that is happiness; to be dissolved into something complete and great." Some six years later he graduated from the local high school named for Abraham Lincoln and entered Harvard College in 1924 with the Class of 1928. He had the reputation even then of being studious, and was never well known in the Yard; but the record shows that he played on his freshman basketball team which defeated Yale 28 to 27. He graduated *magna cum laude* and set off at once for Europe and a vacation largely spent in France and Italy, "checking up in a desultory way on many of the things we had been told in college about the development and achievements of western civilization. Later after graduate school [he continues] came another opportunity to go to Europe for a second year, this time to Greece, on an Archibald Cary Coolidge fellowship. I had meanwhile shifted my major academic

interest from English to Greek and ancient history. All this now seems a long time ago, but I set it down since I am still more interested in the interaction of past and present, and in books, artifacts, and ideas, than in almost any other thing."

That shift from English to Greek and ancient history is, we may suppose, a fortunate instance of intellectual metabolism in the light of what the experiment has produced. For any one else I might have said "intellectual indigestion," for Mr. Pusey learned Greek in the brief span of two years, which in the life of scholarship is no longer than the summer that one swallow is not supposed to make. Perhaps the shift is implicit in that phrase on "the interaction of past and present." It was surely that interest, I should hazard, which led the new Greek scholar to a careful reading of Thucydides. Now Thucydides, as Professor Finley makes so much of, "turns to the past, not . . . for its own sake, but in order to confirm his views on the present. He does not think of himself as a commemorator; he is not even, like Herodotus, wholly concerned with great events in themselves, but almost equally with their social and political causes." This reflection leads me promptly to a note made years ago against a very wise little volume of impressions and comments by Havelock Ellis. What the text said was: "I have been reading Herodotus for just thirty years and I am yet far from the final book of Calliope." But not so far, I might remark parenthetically, as most of us are from the first! "If I were in doubt as to the fascina-

tion of Herodotus," continues the author of *The Dance of Life*, "I should only have to read in Thucydides. One is not called upon to question the great qualities of Thucydides, his psychological insight, his analytic grip of political life, for he is a modern and among the first of moderns. But after one has lived in the great world of Herodotus, to adjust oneself to the little world of Thucydides is not easy." The point of analogy is that Mr. Pusey after careful examination of the smaller field of a Thucydides has now moved into the ampler region of Herodotus. And surely he who has made a creative study of a small college will understand all the better the desperate need of looking outward on his University and not inward toward the red-ripe of the heart.

Suddenly we have a question. What equipment has he brought with him? We know whereinto he is entering, though perhaps a sentence from *The Pilgrim's Progress* is not impertinent. "It is fat Ground, and as you see consisteth much in Meadows; and if a Man was to come here in the Summer-time . . . if he knew not anything before thereof, and if he also delighted himself in the sight of his Eyes, he might see that that would be delightful to him." But we need not remind Mr. Pusey, to borrow from Irwin Edman, that "the geography of recollection is determined by taste and love."

As to the question of equipment, some of you have likely read Gilbert Bailey's recent Profile in the New York *Times*, currently reprinted in the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*. A word or two may be distilled from that and

from what Mr. Pusey has elsewhere said for himself. His original hope, on leaving college, was "to find a job with a publishing house." Failing to do this after a brief search, he took a position as teacher at the Riverdale Country School in New York in the autumn of 1929. It was there that he discovered his natural aptitude for teaching and "soon began to be seriously interested in education." In the autumn of 1931 he returned to Harvard for graduate work, observing in retrospect that "it seems now that by this choice I embarked upon a career that proceeded thereafter with more or less inevitability." This last, I hastily point out, was written before he was offered his present free lodging at No. 17 Quincy Street—but the pattern is entirely consistent, for the impression is clear to me that he was early marked to become a related man. Mr. Bailey, for example, observes that "at the first commencement [of the Riverdale School] the exercises were interrupted while a teenage boy took the platform to present a gift to Mr. Pusey for making English literature interesting to seventh-graders. Since then he has had a more professional kind of praise—two college presidents who have crossed his path have called him 'the best teacher I have ever known.'" The two college presidents were Victor L. Butterfield of Wesleyan University where Mr. Pusey taught the classics from 1940 to 1944; and Henry M. Wriston of Brown University, formerly President of Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin. A few days ago the Boston *Herald* quoted Dr. Wriston at some

length in italicized language. "Mr. Pusey is a brilliant educator; by a wide margin the best young teacher I ever knew." Dr. Wriston, let me add, is a reliable authority since it was he who engaged the promising young scholar in 1935 as a sophomore tutor at Lawrence. "With his coming to Harvard," the President of Brown continues, "we have a new figure deeply committed to the arts and humanities who ought to give an enormous impulse forward in those fields. In the best sense of the word, he should be an 'inside' president, concerned with the operation of Harvard as such, and with the College as the core of this operation." At this point, where the focus lies completely on the humanities, it is precisely in balance to observe that during the Second World War Mr. Pusey taught physics under the Navy V-5 program without having had a college course in physics himself. He was highly praised, too, for the way he taught it. "Appropriately enough," says Mr. Bailey, "he believes in the unity of all knowledge, once you get deep enough into it, and especially if it is tied together through study of the humanities." Or, as the new Harvard president himself puts it: "At Lawrence I tried to get faculty minds to think outside the areas of their own discipline. You can't study economics, music, or anything else in isolation. The humanities draw things back together. . . [But] this has to be done by each man in his own terms."

Mr. Pusey is the second Harvard president (Thomas Hill of Antioch was the other) to come to Cambridge

from the presidency of another college. He assumes his new office at the age of forty-six: younger than President Lowell who took office at fifty-two; older than President Eliot who was thirty-five, and President Conant who was forty. His three immediate predecessors averaged forty-two; yet Mr. Pusey, as I do not have to persuade you, looks far younger than that. In politics he is a Republican—"definitely more of the 'eastern' than the 'midwestern' persuasion." In religion he is an active Episcopalian of deep conviction; and knowing even as little about him as we do, no one should have been surprised to find him saying in his Divinity School address which evoked so fervent an Amen from *The Pilot*: "Theology . . . is expected to carry an answer to our deepest hungers and need." The truth of the very psalmist-poet is in that. The thunder of Melville is not far distant: "The pulpit leads the world."

If he is quiet and reserved in bearing, there is animation in his talk. Since August he has paid a personal call on countless department heads in the University. He is kindly, and inflexible only when he knows that he is right. He does not let you forget that he is a teacher "interested in good teaching at the undergraduate level and in the training of really good teachers." I think back to Bliss Perry whose belief was similar. "The whole tendency of American institutions," said Professor Perry, "is to breed ten administrators to one real teacher. I used to pass University Hall with something of the small boy's dread of passing a cemetery: for teachers lay bur-

ied there under their roll-top desks." And of course Professor Grandgent had this tragedy in mind when he judged that Harvard students "write rather poorly, and speak worse." It is surely the teacher in Mr. Pusey which led him to say: "Formal education has first to make young people see that the values they have absorbed almost automatically from their culture are not necessarily the highest values. Young people must become dissatisfied with the culture they accept, and this is why it is necessary first to start revolutions in their minds and spirits."

Intellectual curiosity is the lasting link between the teacher and the scholar. These fragments toward Mr. Pusey's biography all suggest that the excitement of learning—of "reading under the guidance of great teachers"—remains the wellspring of his life. Only the intellectually excited man can teach; and only the intellectually excited man is capable of producing inspired or even useful scholarship. The two great teacher-scholars in my life were John Livingston Lowes in English literature and George D. Birkhoff in mathematics. Both were giants in their way. Both could follow with Faust *ins Unbetretene*. They are the kind of giants, I imagine, that the new Harvard president would favor—even in the smaller economy size.

As to science: One may assume that Mr. Pusey, as the pendulum swings back, is not unaware of a chasm badly in need of a bridge. Just as there are no half portions of eternity, there can be no grudging compromise between

nature and the spirit of man, between the arts and sciences. "We still reach for symbols to protect us from things we cannot control and do not understand." The Thoreauvian in Brooks Atkinson is speaking. The skeptic in me is prompted to add that man only half understands what he doesn't really know in the first place.

Darwin and Mendel laid on man the chains
That bind him to the past. Ancestral gains,
So pleasant for a spell, of late bizarre,
Suggest that where he was is where we are.

That is why I take heart when Mr. Pusey says that "young people must become dissatisfied with the culture they accept." That is why I see the seeds of a new unity in his recent talk to Harvard's freshmen: "This University is now organically related to all parts and sections of our country—indeed to the whole world. . . . Having chosen to come here, and in turn been chosen, it follows that your interests must grow patiently but steadily into commensuration with a vastly enlarged perspective." That is why I follow him one step beyond the great and many libraries to the bookstore where he tells his freshmen "to read books regularly" and to "*buy* books whenever you can."

Since he recognizes that "education is always both honored and suspect," and has already expressed concern for the strengthening of the Graduate School of Education, we may assume that Mr. Pusey hopes to improve relations between town and gown on the national

scale. He is obviously aware that higher education is today on the defensive. He has been too long a college president not to see that the topographical beauty of the Bunyan quotation is deceptive. "A forest fire," said the author of *And Gladly Teach*, "can be started on any smooth-clipped college campus." It can be started, as a matter of fact, from as far away as an alumnus can see to light a match. But there is already evidence that Mr. Pusey is acutely aware that the alumnus-critic has none of the self-consciousness in this quatrain by Patric Dickinson:

He has now reached to such a pitch
Of self-consciousness that he
Dare not scratch if he has the itch
For fear he is the flea.

I come back to the related man completely useful to his total value. I return to the plain word "joy" in its full joyful sense. I think I detect—I think all of us cannot fail to detect—a coming release of the tensions at the University surviving from the last world war, and a returning element of eagerness in the Yard which only the older graduate can remember. "Wherever a process of life communicates an eagerness to him who lives it," said William James, "there the life becomes genuinely significant." And what did Henry James say to Rupert Brooke on the first occasion when they met? He told him "not to be afraid of being happy." That, in effect, is what I seem to read between the lines in President Pusey's actions to date. It has been pointed out that Mr.

Pusey has never written a book. I see no harm in that. There are two kinds of writers in the world: those who say something and those who say they are saying something. When Harvard's new president publishes a book, I am sure it will fall into the first category. But whatever he may say or do or write, he may not inspire the word *Puseyism*, for that is already in the dictionaries on the side of Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882), the English divine.

Out of Auden—to balance Thucydides—I might now detach the concluding word of the new Prospero to Ariel: "Enjoy your element." But I think to a Midwesterner I should prefer to quote my solitary companion, John Greenleaf Whittier, a Quaker and a New England poet:

And present gratitude
Insures the future's good,
And for the things I see
I trust the things to be . . .
And take, by faith, while living,
My freehold of thanksgiving.

Presentation of President Pusey

by James R. Killian, Jr.

President Land, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I HAVE the honor, in behalf of all of the universities and learned institutions in this area, of congratulating Harvard University on its good fortune in obtaining Mr. Pusey to be its President and of conveying to him our warm good wishes on his assumption of this high office.

Since I am a college president, I cannot in sincerity say to him that his continuance in a college presidency, even though it be that of Harvard, calls for unreserved congratulations. A colleague of mine, Dean Harrison, once remarked that "if he (a college president) were to take an oath of office that set forth literally the requirements on his attention, the results must resemble a medley of a marriage service, the vows of a monastic order, and a research contract with the Air Force. Besides swearing to forsake all other interests than those of his institution, he must take mental vows of personal poverty, intellectual chastity, and social obedience. No bevy of medieval angels clustering on the point of a needle required such nicety of balance as a modern administrator following the curved razor edge of policy needed by present-day events."

It is Harvard's good fortune that its new president, with a decade of presidential experience already behind

him, has a keen sense of balance and is sure-footedly prepared for the unpredictable curves of his new and sharper razor-edge. We who observe him with an experienced eye and all who welcome him as a stimulating colleague pledge our encouragement, good will, and support.

In speaking thus for all institutions in this community, I venture a special word as Mr. Pusey's Cambridge neighbor and as the head of Harvard's nearest institutional neighbor. (I think of Radcliffe's relationship as more matrimonial in character than neighborlike.) We have long practiced the good-neighbor policy in Cambridge, although this happy state was not achieved without some bitterness and strife. Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, each strong, independent, competitive, one venerable and comprehensive, the other young and "bound in lesser volume," have achieved an intellectual federation which makes Cambridge one of the great centers of learning and research in the world. Along with Radcliffe, these two institutions have been creating together a University of Cambridge, an entity which is greater than the sum of its parts and which is the more effective because it has no corporate existence except the imponderable one which resides in the willingness and desire of a community of scholars to collaborate.

I look forward to working with Harvard's new president in cultivating this fruitful good-neighbor policy—a policy which happily extends beyond Cambridge to

embrace the larger academic community of Metropolitan Boston.

I venture to mention also another kind of good-neighbor policy for which we administrators have a special responsibility and to which Dr. Pusey, I am certain, has a deep commitment. I speak of the maintenance and furtherance of neighborly relationships among the learned disciplines. It is the special responsibility of our universities to stress the kinship, indeed the unity, of all knowledge, and to ease the vested interests and even snobberies which sometimes appear among learned men. Objectivity, for example, is not the exclusive monopoly of science, nor humanism the tight monopoly of the liberal arts. In these parlous times we need to remember this and to seek to develop more sensitive couplings interconnecting the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. In designing these couplings, we in no way diminish the opportunity and the right of each discipline to follow its own logic, its own method, and its own skepticism or faith. Mr. McCord has spoken of Mr. Pusey in terms of the related man. We can rejoice in his capacity as the related man and the liberal scholar to bring our scholarly pursuits into harmonious relationships while at the same time encouraging the gifted, unrelated, unorthodox man to feel at home—and thus related.

The story is told that Charles W. Eliot, as a new president of Harvard, attended a meeting of one of his professional school faculties and heard one of the senior

professors arise and demand to know the reason for certain recent departures from tradition. "I can explain the matter quite easily," said Mr. Eliot. "There is a new president."

And so it is today, and happy it is that he has both the opportunity and the courage to depart from traditions either recent or venerable. It is thus by new emphases and fresh points of view that institutions evolve and become better proportioned.

President Land, with these sentiments, anticipations, and affectionate good wishes, I have the honor to present to you, and to the fellows of this Academy, a new voice, a new protagonist, and a new friend we delight to welcome, the President of Harvard University.

These two papers read at a reception in honor of President Nathan Marsh Pusey of Harvard University at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston, on 14 October 1953, are printed in an edition of eighteen hundred copies by The Anthoensen Press, Portland, Maine. The Harvard end papers, designed by Veronica Ruzicka, have been reproduced in offset by The Meriden Gravure Company through the kindness of the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, Harvard College Library.



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